

Millenium Challenge Account Kosovo

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CLARIFICATION #1

Pre-qualification Document for: Design and Build of Utility Scale Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Transmission Connection Infrastructure

Lot 1: 45MW/90MWh Lot 2: 125MW/250MWh

Regarding the Pre-qualification Document for "Design and Build of Utility Scale Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Transmission Connection Infrastructure", Ref. Number PQ No: 01/2024, we wish to inform you that in accordance with ITA 8.1 (Clarification of PQD) in the Pre-Qualification Data Sheet, MCA-Kosovo has received request for clarification. We would like to provide the following responses to those questions:

Quest. No	<u>Question</u> Points of Clarification requested by prospective Applicants	<u>Clarification</u> Response from MCA-Kosovo	Amendment of the PQD YES/NO
1.	Are BESS (Battery Energy Storage Systems), which contain battery cells/modules/racks produced in China, are allowed to be used in these projects? (e.g. European EPC company is allowed to integrate its system with batteries made in China) - According to ITA 6 Eligible Materials, Equipment and Services, "the materials" are also subject to the same restrictions specified for Applicants in ITA 5.	be following the MCC Procurement Policy and Guidelines (accessible here: Accountable Entity Procurement Policy & Guidelines, effective from Jan. 8, 2025) and in accordance with the bidding	No

2.	Regarding non-battery components, what is the level (%) of the Chinese components that can be accepted for these projects? (e.g. PCS, electronics, cables etc.)? - Components like PCS (Power Conversion System) are considered as critical infrastructure for BESS and high cybersecurity standards are applied.	Please refer to the response to question No. 1.	No
3.	Is it possible to join pre-qualification round only with DC-Part (Battery Container) and then later on in RFO/RFQ Stage- invite System Integrator/EPC partner who can provide the full Scope of Work as described by the Employer? - If yes, is any disadvantage foreseen? Due to short notice period for the preparation of pre-qualification process, it is challenging to create a competitive consortium/JV.	to Applicants, paragraph 29.1: "All Applicants whose applications substantially meet or exceed the specified qualification requirements will	No
4.	I am writing to formally request an extension of time for submitting queries related to the prequalification process for the 170 MW battery storage project in Kosovo. Given the complexity of the project and the critical nature of the information required, we believe that additional time will enable us to prepare comprehensive and well-researched queries. This will help ensure that our submission is thorough and fully aligned with the project requirements. We respectfully request an extension of ten (10) days to facilitate a more in-depth review and inquiry process.	Addendum No. 1 has extended the deadline to send clarification requests/queries by one week. The request for clarifications shall be received by MCA-Kosovo no later than January 23, 2025. Please refer to the Addendum No.1 to the PQD issued on January 16, 2025.	Yes (Amended with "Addendum No. 1")
5.	The conditions state that UL certification is required. Can IEC certification be valid instead of UL certification?. Could you please confirm if this is sufficient?	Certification requirements at this stage are provided for information only. Specific requirements will be provided as part of the Request for Offers.	No

6.	Would the 2 hour BESS capacity be designed with consideration for Depth of Discharge (DOD) and Round-Trip Efficiency (RTE) values?	Specific requirements will be provided as part of the Request for Offers.	No
7.	Are there any restrictions on the country of origin for the inverter and PCS?	Please refer to response to question No. 1	No
8.	What will be the auction structure? Will it follow an round and round descending-bid format? or just one phase lowest win? Please clarify the mechanism and rules governing the auction process.	This is not an auction process. Please refer to the Prequalification documents for guidance of the	No
9.	Is a bank guarantee or reference letter required? Are participants required to submit a bank guarantee or a reference letter as part of their pre-qualification processes at this stage.	A bank guarantee is not required. For the Prequalification process there is no bank guarantee required. Please refer to section III, Qualification Criteria and Requirements on the list of documents and forms which are being requested at this stage.	No
10.	Must the entity with specific experience be part of the bidding consortium? Is it mandatory for the entity possessing the specific technical or project-related experience to be a direct participant in the bidding consortium, or can their expertise be subcontracted or leveraged in another manner?	Section III, Qualification Criteria (2.4.2 Specific	No
11.	If Specific experience criteria can be qualified by a subcontractor, is it possible to engage subcontractor after pre-qualification phase or make any changes afterwards, provided their qualifications align with the project requirements?	The Prequalification Document Section I, Instructions to Applicants, Paragraph 25, Sub-contractors (page 15), reads as follows: "25.2 Applicants shall not be allowed to replace their subcontractor(s) after the pre-qualification. However, a pre-qualified Applicant would be permitted to introduce new subcontractors at the time of submission of its bid or offer at the discretion of the Employer".	No
12.	Is it possible for a asian company to be part of the consortium as minorty share holder?	The Applicants must comply with the eligibility criteria as per the MCC Procurement Policy and Guidelines (accessible here: Accountable Entity Procurement Policy & Guidelines, effective from Jan. 8, 2025). In the case where an Applicant intends to join with an associate, then such associate will also be	No

		subject to the eligibility criteria set forth in this PQD and the MCC PPG Interested Applicants may read the MCC Guidance on Ineligible Firms and Individuals as referred on the <i>AE Procurement Policy and Guidelines</i> , Section 4.10 and 8.2	
13.	Could you outline the evaluation criteria for the bids? Will the assessment be based solely on pricing, or will technical qualifications and experience be weighted as well?	MCA-Kosovo is planning the bidding process to be conducted based on the procedures of the QPBS (Quality and Price Base Selection). For more information, please refer to the MCC AE Procurement Policy and Guidelines (Paragraph 6.3, page 39) (accessible here: Accountable Entity Procurement Policy & Guidelines, effective from Jan. 8, 2025). Evaluation criteria will be shared with prequalified companies with the upcoming Request for Offers (RFO) in due time. Please note that MCA-Kosovo may decide to use any other method as permitted in the MCC Procedures.	No
14.	The financial criterion outlined in Point 2.3.1, Historical Financial Performance, of Section III, Qualification Criteria and Requirements, establishes a current ratio (total assets / total liabilities) threshold of >1.5. While we understand the importance of evaluating the financial stability of applicants, we believe this benchmark is set at a level that may not accurately reflect the financial conditions of many companies within the relevant sector. Given the above, we are concerned that this requirement could unduly limit the pool of qualified applicants. To promote a competitive and inclusive bidding process, we respectfully request that the current ratio threshold be revised to >1.4?	The financial criteria outlined in Section III, Qualification Criteria and Requirements (2.3.1) are established to ensure Applicants possess the financial resilience necessary to execute the Works effectively,	No

	This adjustment would better align with industry norms while continuing to ensure that applicants demonstrate sufficient financial strength and stability.	infrastructure projects of this scale and complexity.	
		The Average coefficient of Current ratio threshold of ≥1.5 shall remain.	
15.	The financial criterion detailed in Point 2.3.2, Annual Average Turnover, of Section III, Qualification Criteria and Requirements, mandates that each consortium member must meet fifteen percent (15%) of the overall turnover requirement. Considering the size of the market in our region, where projects of this scale and complexity are very few, we kindly propose that this threshold be reduced to 10%?	Please refer to the Addendum 2	Yes
	This adjustment would allow greater participation from local companies as part of international consortia, fostering inclusivity and leveraging regional expertise. We firmly believe that this modification aligns with the principles of fostering sustainable development and maximizing competitive participation, which are integral to the successful realization of the project's objectives.		
16.	Please confirm whether a company can bid for one or both lots?	Interested Applicants may participate in one or both lots.	No
17.	We would like to know whether a company can participate as a JV with one company for one lot and with another company for another lot?	Yes, one company may participate in one Lot with one company as a Joint Venture and with another company in the other Lot. The submission for these cases should be done separately per Lot including all the required forms per Lot. Each Lot will be evaluated separately ; therefore, the combined evaluation requirement described in Section III, Sub-factors 2.3.2; 2.3.3; and 2.4.1., will not be applicable. Please note that a company (or any of its affiliates) cannot be a member of more than one JV or	No
		Application submitted for the same lot (e.g., two JVs bidding for Lot 1). This is strictly prohibited under	

		ITA 5.6(d) to prevent conflicts of interest and ensure fair competition.	
18.	Please indicate how the award procedure for the two lots will be carried out. Will bidding for both lots be evaluated positively?	The award procedures will be communicated to applicants that are qualified via the Prequalification process through the request for offers document.	No
19.	In section 2.4.1 Similar Experience we would like to know if you will accept as similar projects those related to energy production and those related to PV with battery storage?	For 2.4.1, experience in large scale energy projects such as generation from renewable energy sources, and other energy generation technologies, including such technologies combined with battery storage, which are similar in size, complexity and methods/technology will be considered.	No
20.	In case of JV, please confirm whether each member must comply with ITA 12.1(d) related to ISO certificates or all members combined?	All members combined can fulfill this requirement.	No
21.	Section IV. Application forms - form Application Submission Form - Point (6) - please inform does the Applicant need for key activities identified in Section III. Qualification Criteria and Requirements Sub-Factor 2.4.2 which the Applicant intends to subcontract write also specialized subcontractor name in this point (6) of Form or only key activities Point (14) - in the case that form is only handwritten signed (not digital/digitalized signature), scanned and upload - is this acceptable Are handwritten signed/scanned (not digital/digitalized signature) documents valid for other application documents?	Point 6, should indicate the name of the key activity and sub-contractor. Please refer to Addendum No. 2. Point 14- Handwritten signed and scanned is valid and acceptable for this Form and all the other Forms.	Yes.
22.	Section I. Instructions to Applicants - point 5.6 (d) and 25.1; Section III. Qualification Criteria and Requirements Sub-Factor 2.4.2 1) Please confirm that nominated specialized subcontractors identified in Section III. Qualification Criteria and Requirements	 ITA 5.6 (d) indicates that nominated Subcontractors can participate in more than one Application. Please refer to response to question No. 11 	No

	Sub-Factor 2.4.2 can participate in more than one Application in this pre-qualification process? 2) Please confirm that nominated specialized subcontractors identified in Section III. Qualification Criteria and Requirements Sub-Factor 2.4.2 can be substituted during the RFO process? 3) Please clarify point 25.1 - it is mentioned that "proposed subcontractors in Forms ELI-2 and EXP (experience) 2-5" because specialized subcontractor is mentioned only in Form EXP-3?	3) In accordance with the PQ Document, Section III, Qualification Criteria and Requirements, 2.0 Qualification, second paragraph indicates that the only the experience listed in 2.4.2 Specific Experience in Key Activities may be evaluated from the proposed sub-contractor and may be added to the qualifications of the Applicant for that designated experience requirement; therefore, Form EXP-3 should indicate the experience of the sub-contractors. Please review Section III - 2.0 Qualification for a comprehensive list of all the necessary requirements to be completed for the Subcontractors.	
23.	Section III. Qualification Criteria and Requirements; Section IV. Application forms 1) Form ELI-4 is not mentioned in Section III. But it is mentioned in ITA 15.1 Is it obligated to submit also by specialized subcontractor? 2) Form CON-3 is not mentioned in Section III. With reference to ITA 15.1 and explanation in form CON-3 that this form is to be completed upon submission of Application, please confirm that CON-3 is not needed in this stage. 3) There is missing Sub-Factor 2.5 - written mistake? 4) Please clarify requirement 2.4.1. which years are within the last five (5) years - 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021, whole 2020 + January, February 2025?	1) Form ELI-4 is part of the Application forms and should be completed. It is not applicable to Sub-Contractors. 2) Form CON-3 is part of the Application forms and should be completed. This Form is part of the Eligibility Criteria. Please note that Addendum No. 2 specifies that this Form has been included as part of the 2.1.3 Eligibility. 3) The Sub-Factor numbering has been corrected. Please refer to the Addendum No. 2 4) The numbering of years will start counting from the date of the submission of the Applications. A clarifying note has been added to 2.4.1 of Section III as included in Addendum No. 2.	Yes
24.	Section III. Qualification Criteria and Requirements - Please note that in Qualification Criteria from point 2.1.1. to 2.2.4 for that Applicant, it is stated "Joint Venture or Association". From	Please see the Addendum No. 2	Yes

	point 2.3.1 and further it is stated "Joint Venture" without Association. Is this a mistake or Association is no longer considered?		
25.	 Section IV. Application forms - Form EXP-3 Specific Construction Experience in Key Activities Considering the proof of experience, please confirm if one (1) contract is enough for each key activity. 	As indicated in Section III, 2.4.2, at least one contract.	No
26.	The clarification response date is postponed to January 30, 2025, accordingly, do we expect as well shifting the submission date later than February 14, 2025?	MCA-K has decided to extend the submission deadline until March 03, 2025, 14:00, CET. Please see Addendum 2.	Yes
27	Section III. Qualification Criteria and Requirements, 2.3 Financial Situation, Factor 2.3.2 Annual Average Turnover (Minimum average annual design & build turnover of Lot 1: 36 mil. USD, Lot 2: 90 mil. USD. Combined Lot 1 & Lot 2: 110 million USD) Factor 2.3.3 Financial Resources (cash-flow requirement: Lot 1: 5 mil. USD, Lot 2: 12.5 mil. USD) Based on the fact that this project is unique in the Republic of Kosovo, and considering the country's economic budget, companies with high financial capacity are rare. To increase the chances of more companies offering proposals and to enhance competition, I believe that the current Joint Venture (JV) criteria may hinder this process and significantly limit the market within the Republic of Kosovo. As a citizen of the Republic of Kosovo, I am not only pleased by the fact that such a project will be undertaken but also excited about the opportunity to be a part of it. If we or someone else, in collaboration with a global company, were to emerge as the winning bidder, this would represent a substantial opportunity for high-level economic development for companies within our Republic. The criteria outlined below indicate a limitation that may restrict local participation:	The MCC Program Procurement Principles require that procurement contracts be awarded only to qualified, willing, and capable Offerors. The Qualification Criteria and Requirements are determined with the aim of ensuring qualitative and timely completion of the project, based on the highest standards and best practices for projects of similar nature, size and complexity. The qualification process accommodates joint ventures (JVs) and/or subcontracting possibilities, allowing local firms to partner with other companies to meet the requirements. However, proportional contributions within JVs are essential to maintain accountability and mitigate risks—key factors for a project of this magnitude.	No

- The annual turnover requirement of 15% for both lots amounts to USD 16.5 million, which is a very high threshold and poses a significant barrier for companies from Kosovo.

Moreover, considering that we are a country undergoing substantial investments, and the banking system is highly bureaucratic, the likelihood of finding companies with 15% of the allocated funds readily available is quite low.

Since applicants may join forces, the partnership formation should be free from any conditions or restrictions on percentage shares. When I say "free," I mean that the partnership should not be subject to rigid stipulations regarding ownership percentages.

It is worth noting that if an analysis is made of which companies have high turnover and high liquidity, they are companies that are not in the energy sector, but are companies that are in the construction sector, road paving companies, grocery store chains, which meet this criterion but are not related to energy infrastructure.

I strongly believe in the MCC program and also trust that the MCA program will understand our request. Our company is currently in discussions with globally recognized firms for this project, and they have expressed interest in assisting us in competing together. It would not be ethical for foreign companies to win the project while we act as subcontractors, as this would be detrimental to the project's success as a whole.

Foreign companies can apply to win the project, complete it, and leave without necessarily prioritizing quality or the long-term sustainability of the work, as their main objective may be profit. In contrast, Kosovo-based companies not only have a vested interest in delivering high-quality work, but also in ensuring the long-term viability of the project since we live and work in this country. We would invest in the success of this project and wish to establish a strong reputation for future opportunities. Given that similar projects may be expected in neighboring countries, a positive reference from this project could provide further opportunities for future work. This could lead to Kosovo-based companies becoming EPC contractors in

	foreign markets, which would have a significant positive impact on the country's economic development. We request that the criteria for the JV be that all members combined must meet the requirements without distinction for the companies.		
28	Upon a comprehensive review of the tender documentation, we noted the financial criterion detailed in Point 2.3.2, Annual Average Turnover, of Section III. Qualification Criteria and Requirements, mandates that each consortium member must meet fifteen percent (15%) of the overall turnover requirement. Considering the size of the market in our region, where projects of this scale and complexity are very few, we kindly propose that this threshold be reduced to 10%. This adjustment would allow greater participation from local companies as part of international consortia, fostering inclusivity and leveraging regional expertise. We firmly believe that this modification aligns with the principles of fostering sustainable development and maximizing competitive participation, which are integral to the successful realization of the project's objectives.		Yes
	We would greatly appreciate your consideration of this proposal.		
29	After reviewing the procurement conditions, especially those related to the fulfillment of criteria by applicants as joint venture (JV) partners and leaders, we believe that these criteria are unreasonable and unfair for the following reasons: 1. Percentage and criteria for task fulfillment by both JV	1. The financial criteria have been established to ensure that contractors have the capacity to complete this critical project within the required timeline, given the Compact End Date. These thresholds are aligned with the project's scale, complexity, and risks. The qualification process	No
29	members: According to the procurement terms, both parties (the applicant and the JV leader) are required to meet specific criteria based on designated percentages. This creates limitations for companies wishing to partner for the execution of the project and is not appropriate for the current market.	accommodates joint ventures (JVs), allowing local firms to partner with other companies to meet the requirements. However, proportional contributions within JVs are essential to maintain accountability and mitigate risks—key factors for a project of this magnitude.	1110

- 2. Joint venture does not require the secondary company to have separate references and bank turnover: In line with the procurement law in Kosovo, a joint venture does not mandate that the secondary company must have separate references, bank turnover, and other such criteria. This practice encourages greater competitiveness and provides opportunities for smaller companies to participate, who may have the capability to contribute to the project, but do not meet such separate requirements that are inappropriate for the nature of joint ventures.
- 3. Limiting competition in the electrical energy sector: The criteria set forth in the procurement request are of a nature that limits competition, especially in the electrical energy sector, where many companies, due to the nature of the project, may have the opportunity to contribute specifically and collaborate with other specialized partners.
- 4. The collaboration model proposed by our company: Our company has entered into an agreement with a global company for this project, which will take on the entire engineering and manufacturing portion. On the other hand, our company will function as a liaison office, engaged in managing the works and coordinating the project's implementation activities. This collaboration model ensures efficient and successful project delivery without the need for unnecessary task division or the inappropriate fulfillment of criteria. Our agreement with the company is as a JV.

For these reasons, we request that the procurement documentation be reviewed and the criteria related to percentages, references, bank turnover, and separate criteria be removed, allowing all applicants to fully meet the contract without unjust limitations. We believe this The MCC Program Procurement Principles require will increase competition and provide a more efficient implementation of the project, as well as align with the applicable lifted, willing, and capable Offerors. legislation.

- The procurement activities of MCA Kosovo are conducted under MCC Accountable Entity Procurement Policy and Guidelines (PPG) and not the Procurement Law in Kosovo. The AE PPG sets out the principles, rules, and procedures that govern the conduct and administration of procurement for the goods, works, and consultant and non-consultant services by the Millennium Challenge Account Entity. You can find the MCC Accountable Entity PPG on the following MCC website link: Accountable Entity Procurement Policy & Guidelines, effective from Jan. 8, 2025).
- 3. The criteria aim to balance competition with the need for qualified and capable contractors. They do not preclude collaboration or specialization but ensure that all offerors, including JVs, meet minimum requirements to safeguard project outcomes.
- 4. All JV arrangements must comply with the outlined criteria to ensure fairness and accountability. The criteria are not intended to hinder partnerships but to ensure that both partners collectively and individually demonstrate the capability to deliver.

that procurement contracts be awarded only to qual-

The financial and qualification criteria in the procurement documentation are designed to mitigate risks and ensure that contractors have the capacity to

		complete the project successfully and within the required timeline. The specified thresholds and criteria are consistent with international standards and reflect the demands of a project of this scale and complexity and are aligned with MCC mandated legislation.	
30	Could you please share the complete <u>Instructions to Applicants (ITA)</u> document with us? This will allow us to thoroughly review the detailed qualification and eligibility criteria.	The complete Instructions to Applicants (ITA) are included in Section I of the document issued for this Prequalification (pages 2-17)	No
31	Form EXP-3: Specific Construction Experience in Key Activities We note that it specifies a minimum experience requirement for Single BESS projects of 10 MW, including HV Works. We are currently engaged as the EPC contractor for a Standalone BESS project with a capacity of 1000 MWh. However, the HV Works are excluded from the EPC scope of work for this project. The project is scheduled for commissioning in Q2'25. We believe that this project qualifies us under the specified criteria. Could you please confirm? However, for commissioned BESS projects, we have a cumulative capacity of 52 MWh. However, none of these projects include a PCS capacity of 10 MW within a single project.	Please refer to table 2.4 Experience, 2.4.2 Specific experience in Key Activities, where All members combined must meet requirement.	No
32	Form EXP-2: Similar Construction Experience Under our parent company's umbrella, we have completed many similar projects with a relevant scope. Can this be considered as similar construction experience in favor of the applicant? We would be grateful if you could provide clarification or additional details on the above points at your earliest convenience. This will allow us to prepare our proposal in full compliance with the tender requirements.	Please refer to table 2.4 Experience, 2.4.1 Similar experience, where All members combined must meet requirement.	No

33	There is a Link to the Accountable Entity Procurement Policy & Guidelines (AE PPG or PPG) https://www.mcc.gov/content/uploads/policy-ae-ppg-effective- 010124.pdf This link does not work, maybe that it has been updated. Could you please send the information on where to find the file?	here: Accountable Entity Procurement Policy & Guidelines, effective from Jan. 8, 2025)	No
34.	Section IV. Application Forms under the FIN-1 Financial Situation, page 65: The requirements indicated in the form FIN-1: Financial Situation suggest that the financial data should cover the last five years, while the fields specify three years. Should this be understood as meaning that the financial data to be submitted should cover the last three years and there is an error in the form, or should the financial data cover three selected years within the last five-year period? See below: Section IV. Application Forms FIN-1: Financial Situation Each Applicant or member of a JV/Association making up an Applicant must fill in this form. Financial Data for Previous 5 Years [USS Equivalent] Year 1: Year 2: Year 3:	The Form has been amended through the Amendment No. 2 The financial data cover three selected years (i.e. 2021, 2022, 2023): Financial Data for Previous 3 Years [US\$ Equivalent] Year 1: Year 2: Year 3:	Yes
35	Section IV. Application Forms under the FIN-2; Average Annual Design and Build Turnover, page 66: Should the average Annual turnover of Design and Build be understood jointly or separately, or can it be understood as a choice of one of the turnovers? See below: ↓	Please review the information provided for this requirement under Section III, 2.0 Qualification, number 2.3.2. and modified through the Amendment No. 2	Yes

	Section IV. Ap	Section IV. Application Forms							
	100	ED: 2			1.00				
		FIN-2: Average	Annual De	sign & Build	1 1 urnover				
	Each Applicant or member of a $JV/Association$ making up an Applicant must fill in this form.								
		Annual Turnover Data for the Last 3 Years (Design & Build only)							
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	Teat	Currency		Rate		Equivalent			
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		Average Annual Tur	rnover		1				
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	Section II	I. Qualification	Criteria	a and Re	equirer	nents			
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	financial	situation should	l point	annual	constr	uction a	nd/or desigr	1	
	turnover.	which is not cor	sistent	t with th	e conte	ent of FII	N-2 form. See		
	below: ↓								
	Section III. Qualification	Section III. Qualification Criteria and Requirements Factor 2.3 Financial Situation ^{1/2}							
	Factor								
			Criteria						
	Sub-Factor			Appl	Applicant Joint Venture		Documentation		
36		Indicative Requirement	Single Entity	All members	Each member	At least one member	Required	The requirement has been corrected in the Form FIN-	Yes
30		completed, within the last		combined	- memoer			2. Please refer to Addendum No. 2.	105
		three (3) years. Values to determine annual							
		construction and/or design turnover are to be demonstrated in the audited							
		financial statements (income statements) of the							
		last three (3) years (2021, 2022, 2023 OR 2022, 2023,							
		2024) and are to be considered to be							
		indicative ¹ .							
						onal and should be			
	Financial statements f	for the year 2024 if not audited by the dea	idine of the nrea	ualification can be a	considered provis	onal and should be	ssociated with a statement		
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Date of issue: January 28, 2025

Drilon Potera

Procurement Director

MCA Kosovo